

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

DECLASSIFIED
PA/HO, Department of State
E.O. 12958, as amended
Date: 6-30-05

~~TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE~~
~~EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY~~

November 19, 1971

Dear Dick:

Enclosed are two messages you should hand to the Chinese Ambassador during your meeting on Saturday, November 20, 1971. The first message is a note concerning the announcement of the date for the President's visit. The second is a personal communication from Dr. Kissinger to Prime Minister Chou En-lai about the Vietnam negotiations.

We are all most grateful for your efforts.

Sincerely,

/s/

Alexander M. Haig, Jr.
Brigadier General, U.S. Army
Deputy Assistant to the President
for National Security Affairs

Major General Vernon Walters
Senior U.S. Military Attache
American Embassy
Paris France
APO New York 09777

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The United States accepts the proposed date of November 29 at 1600 Washington time for the agreed announcement of the date for the President's visit.

The President is holding a press conference on November 30 at 2000 Pacific time (2300 Washington time) at which time he would like to be able to respond to questions by releasing the additional information on the visit contained in the U. S. note delivered on November 16, 1971. If the Chinese side agrees that this additional information can be made known, the U. S. side would be grateful if the Chinese side would similarly defer its public release until November 30 at 2300 Washington time.

In view of the fact that a North Vietnamese delegation is shortly visiting Peking, I would like to put forward some comments on the present negotiating situation against the background of our discussions in Peking.

The United States government is taking seriously your views that Indochina is an urgent issue for the relaxation of tensions in the Far East and it would help to have this issue substantially settled before the President's visit to the People's Republic of China.

On October 11, 1971 the United States presented to North Vietnam a new comprehensive proposal designed to bring a rapid end to the war on a basis just for all parties. While it would not be appropriate for us to give you the details of this proposal, you should know that it provides for the total withdrawal of American forces which you have urged upon us, as well as the maximum suggestions that we can make on the political issue.

The U.S. side proposed a private meeting on November 1, 1971 between me and Le Duc Tho, or any other appropriate representative of the political leadership in Hanoi, together with Xuan Thuy. On October 25, 1971 the North Vietnamese side said that Le Duc Tho and Xuan Thuy would be willing to meet with me on November 20, 1971. The U.S. side accepted this later date.

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On November 17, 1971 -- or three days before the scheduled meeting and after all arrangements for a secret visit to Paris had been made -- the North Vietnamese informed us that Le Duc Tho had suddenly become ill and could not attend the meeting. On November 19, 1971 we informed the North Vietnamese that under these circumstances I would not be travelling to Paris; that we remained ready to meet with Le Duc Tho, or any other appropriate representative of the political leadership in Hanoi, together with Xuan Thuy; and that we would wait to hear North Vietnamese suggestions for a new date.

As I told you and Vice Chairman Yeh Chien-ying, and as we have made clear to the North Vietnamese, the United States is prepared to treat North Vietnamese concerns with generosity. At the same time, the People's Republic of China, as a great country, will recognize that we cannot permit ourselves to be humiliated, no matter what the possible consequences for other policies.

We know that the People's Republic, like the United States, does not trade in principles. We have no specific request to make, and we do not expect an answer to this communication. I am sending you this message to keep you informed of major developments as President Nixon's visit draws closer and in the spirit of candor which has marked our conversations.